

Nation stands with you and prays for you. We mourn those whom we've lost, and we face the future together.

In times like these, we realize both the purpose and the limitations of Government. The Government cannot take away your pain and sorrow, but it can bring the killers to justice. It can devote its energy and resources to try to prevent other families from experiencing what you're going through and can help remove some of the financial obligations it imposes to ease your burdens.

The Oklahoma City bombing was a terrible crime, and justice was done. And I can assure each of you that justice will be done to all those who are responsible for the evil acts of September the 11th.

We've already driven the Taliban from power in Afghanistan, and we're helping a new government take its place. We've infiltrated Al Qaida caves. We destroyed their camps. We will continue to destroy their bunkers and their hideaways. We've put them on the run, and we'll hunt them down, wherever they try to hide, and bring them to justice.

As we wage the war on terrorism abroad, we will also comfort families deeply hurt by terrorism here at home. The Members of the United States Congress who came together to pass this bill I'll sign today had one goal in mind: to help ease your financial burdens as you struggle to cope with the loss of your loved ones.

Many families lost their primary wage earners in the attack on the Murrah Federal Building, in the attacks of September the 11th, and in the anthrax attacks after September the 11th. This financial strain deepens the emotional and psychological impact of the initial tragedies. The legislation passed by Congress will relieve the tax burden on families who have lost loved ones. Under this law, the Federal Government will collect no income taxes on wages earned by terrorism victims in the year of their death or in the preceding year.

Families of victims killed in the Oklahoma City bombing will receive a tax refund on behalf of their relatives. Some death benefits paid by employers will be exempt from Federal taxation. Lower State tax rates will apply to victims of terrorist attacks as well as to members of the armed services who have been killed in combat zones. And to help insure that families receive as much relief as possible from charitable organizations, payments from charitable organizations to victims' families will be exempt from Federal taxation.

The Victims of Terrorism Tax Relief Act is an important example of our national unity and resolve, and it's my honor to sign it today.

God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:18 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. H.R. 2884, approved January 23, was assigned Public Law No. 107-134.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Terrorists Who Threaten To Disrupt the Middle East Peace Process

January 18, 2002

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national

emergency unless, prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the

emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent the enclosed notice, stating that the emergency declared with respect to foreign terrorists who threaten to disrupt the Middle East peace process is to continue in effect beyond January 23, 2002, to the *Federal Register* for publication. The most recent notice continuing this emergency was published in the *Federal Register* on January 22, 2001 (66 *Fed. Reg.* 7371).

The crisis with respect to the grave acts of violence committed by foreign terrorists that disrupt the Middle East peace process that led to the declaration of a national emergency on January 23, 1995, as expanded on August 20, 1998, has not been resolved. Terrorist groups continue to engage in activities that have the purpose or effect of threatening the Middle East peace process, and that are hostile to United

States interests in the region. Such actions constitute an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States. For these reasons, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared with respect to foreign terrorists who threaten to disrupt the Middle East peace process and maintain in force the economic sanctions against them to respond to this threat.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Richard B. Cheney, President of the Senate. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 24. The notice of January 18 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on the National
Emergency With Respect to Terrorists Who Threaten To Disrupt the
Middle East Peace Process
January 18, 2002

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

As required by section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1641(c), and section 204(c) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, 50 U.S.C. 1703(c), I transmit herewith a 6-month periodic report on the national emergency, declared in Executive Order 12947 of January 23, 1995, with respect to terrorists who threaten to disrupt the Middle East peace process.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Richard B. Cheney, President of the Senate. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 24.